

A GREENBELT for the Bay Area



. . . open space for people.



“OUR FINITE LAND . . .”

Across the nation our cities are in trouble and our land is being eaten away by urban sprawl. In the Bay Area, projections now indicate that with our current style of sprawling development, 196,000 more acres of land—an area over **six times** the size of the City of San Francisco—will be consumed by the year 2000. If we allow this to happen, the goals of preserving our open space (especially maintaining agricultural land) and revitalizing our cities will be greatly jeopardized. It is imperative today to step back, look at what we have done and determine our options in order to avoid repeating the mistakes of past decades. **It is time to apply an ethic of stewardship to our most precious natural resource—our finite supply of land.**

One option is to commit ourselves to a program of planned metropolitan land use that will both bring our cities back to life and save the open lands which surround them from further unnecessary and wasteful encroachment. But in order both to protect these productive lands and to guide development into existing cities, the perimeters of urbanization must be definitely and permanently established. That's why we need a Greenbelt for the Bay Area.

THE BAY AREA'S NATURAL GREENBELT: How It Works

Energy conservation . . . employment . . . food production . . . protection from floods and landslides . . . the beauty of the land . . . These are just some of the benefits provided by the Bay Area's 4 million acre natural Greenbelt, which we often take for granted. The Greenbelt gives us the ingredients for a healthy balance between the man-made and the natural environments of the Bay region. But it is we who hold in our hands the future of this balance.

Only by appreciating how the Greenbelt works and by ensuring its permanent protection can we maintain the six major functions of its open space lands—functions which are absolutely necessary for the health and well-being of ourselves, our land and our cities.

THE GREENBELT:



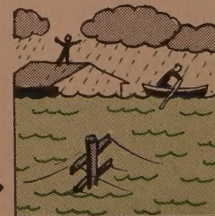
PROVIDES LOCAL RESOURCE PRODUCTION in agriculture, grazing, mineral extraction and timber harvesting.

SHAPES AND CONTAINS URBAN DEVELOPMENT by separating individual communities and blocking urban sprawl.



PROVIDES FOR HUMAN HEALTH AND WELL-BEING by protecting watershed and airshed lands. In addition, open space provides psychological benefits crucial to our individual and social well-being.

PROVIDES FOR HUMAN SAFETY by keeping flood plains, landslide areas and fire-prone areas from being developed.



ENSURES NATURAL AREA CONSERVATION by maintaining plant and animal habitats, and preserving important geologic, historic and scenic areas near cities.

OFFERS RECREATION in regional parks, ecology study areas and wilderness areas, and in many other kinds of open land and water areas.

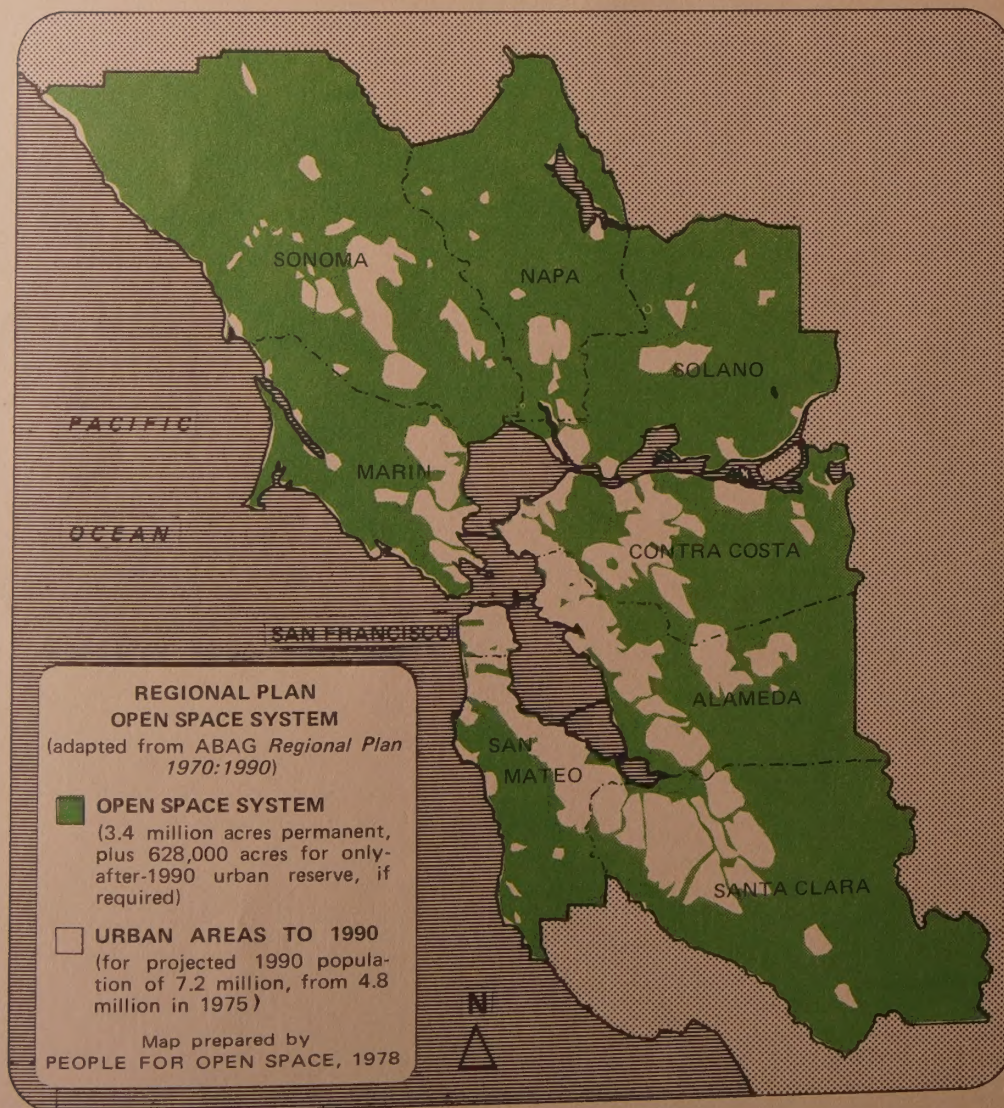


WHAT IS A REGIONAL GREENBELT?

A regional Greenbelt is an officially-established and permanent open space preserve surrounding and supporting the cities in a metropolitan region. The term "Greenbelt" is particularly important because it emphasizes the crucial need for specifically defining the boundary between urban areas and the open lands beyond.



An illustration of what the Bay Area Greenbelt should look like is the open space plan prepared by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) in 1970, shown in the diagram below. However, this plan anticipated many more people in the Bay Area by 1990 than population trends now indicate. Therefore, officially establishing such a Greenbelt now will require a citizen-led campaign to first revise and then carry out the ABAG Plan—county by county.



THE FOUNDATION OF OUR GREENBELT

Major portions of the Bay Area's natural Greenbelt are already preserved, and are thus the foundation for a future, officially established Greenbelt:

Watersheds set aside in years past have preserved tens of thousands of acres of land on the Peninsula, in the East Bay, and in Marin County—much of which is available for recreation.

In the 1960's and 70's, the establishment of the Point Reyes National Seashore in western Marin County and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in the Marin Headlands and in San Francisco added more than 100,000 acres of protected open space to the Bay Area's future Greenbelt.

Large amounts of agricultural land have been temporarily protected from urbanization through the state's Williamson Act, which reduces property taxes on farmland in exchange for ten year guarantees of no development.

State, regional park and special district open space systems, together with large local parks and wildlife preserves throughout the nine counties, have also contributed major segments of permanent open space, now totalling almost 600,000 acres of the 3.4 million acres called for in the 1970 Regional Plan.

But despite these important actions, the overall trend toward the destruction of our open land resources continues.



Point Reyes National Seashore

NEEDED: Permanent Protection

Bite-by-bite the greenbelt is gradually being eaten into—and with each bite goes more city-serving, land-based activity that can never be reclaimed: A dairy farm on the outskirts of Petaluma becomes a housing tract . . . a walnut grove near Concord is paved for a shopping center . . . a new freeway interchange near San Jose obliterates a cherry orchard . . .

This pattern of development is not inevitable. There are alternative means to manage the growth predicted for the region in the next decade. But these growth management efforts will ultimately be ineffective without a permanent Greenbelt. A greenbelt will shape and guide new urban development, while protecting the farmlands, watersheds and other open space of the Bay Area.

East Bay parkland - Mt. Diablo





POS: Preserving Open Space for People

Since 1958, People for Open Space (POS), a non-profit regional conservation organization, has been educating citizens about the need for preserving the Bay Area's open space resources. Formed during a successful campaign to keep East Bay watershed lands from being subdivided, POS has played a major role in stimulating regionwide planning for open space and recreation. In order to help dramatize the need for and importance of such efforts, we prepared *The Case for Open Space* in 1969. This foundation-financed study demonstrated for the first time that a large, permanent Greenbelt was economically feasible in the Bay Area. We have helped local conservationists develop common policies and exchange information on open space issues. During the past 20 years we have published the *Regional Exchange* newsletter and have held 15 major conferences. We have also spoken out for the protection of many crucial open space areas, including the Napa Valley vineyards, San Bruno Mountain, the East Bay Ridglands and the farmlands of the South Santa Clara Valley.

In 1976 we began a concerted citizen effort to establish a permanent nine-county Greenbelt for the Bay Area. As a major step toward this goal we launched our two-year Farmlands Project in early 1979. This foundation-financed project is a study of how to preserve the region's two million acres of agricultural land—the key element in the Bay Area's Greenbelt.

We Need Your Support!

The goal of protecting the open space of the entire nine-county region is one which will benefit all residents of the Bay Area. You can help in the effort to achieve this goal by giving both POS and local conservation groups your support. Your membership in POS, and where possible your active involvement, is crucial to our work and will be a significant addition to the growing number of our supporters. We hope you will join us.

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